

Bulletin

January 6, 1947

Tebet 14, 5707

From the Desk of Rabbi Steinberg

I have a request to make of my congregants, or to put it more accurately, of a small group among them. I make it diffidently and reluctantly, for it will appear an ungracious response to what is intended as a courtesy. Yet make it I must, and with all the bluntness at my command. Neither my conscience nor comfort allow me any alternative.

I wish to urge those few persons in the Park Avenue Synagogue who have made it a practice to send *Christmas* greetings to their *Jewish* friends to desist from doing so in the future. Particularly do I ask that they spare their rabbi the receipt of such messages. The pleasure I derive from being remembered is more than offset by the unhappy emotions evoked by the form the remembrance takes. I never get a Christmas card from a Jew without being plunged into the most painful reflections over the spiritual gaucherie of which otherwise cultivated people are sometimes capable; over the capacity of Jews to overlook, in their desire to do as do the Gentiles, a festival as lovely and significant as *Hanukkah*; over the ominous portent for the future of Judaism which may lie in such an episode; and, when the greeting comes from a member of my congregation, over the influence I am exerting on the persons whose souls are supposedly in my care.

December 25th, turn the matter as you will, is a Christian festival. Jews may, of course, and with perfect propriety, salute their Christian friends in its name. Anyone may with equal correctness salute anyone over the beginning of the cal-

(Continued on page 2)

Mrs. J. Hammerman Will Report To Congregation, Jan. 10th

To Discuss World Zionist Congress

Mrs. Joseph Hammerman, a member of the Park Avenue Synagogue, and active on the Committee on Adult Education and in the Sisterhood, will report to the Congregation on her participation as a delegate to the World Zionist Congress, at the Sabbath Service on Friday evening, January 10th at 8:30 p.m. Mrs. Hammerman was sent to the meetings at Basle, Switzerland as a representative of the national Hadassah organization, where she has been an active member and officer for many years. A cable received from Mrs. Hammerman just as this issue went to press stated that she

was proceeding home rapidly to prepare all the materials on the many sessions she attended in order to be able to give the Congregation a full report on the proceedings.

The sessions of the World Zionist Congress which have just ended were the stormiest since the days of Theodore Herzl when the question of an additional homeland to Palestine, namely British Uganda, was debated. The sessions had been postponed from the middle of last summer due to the detention of many of the Palestinian delegates by the British as a result of the illegal immigration and resistance campaigns now going on in Eretz Yisrael. Delegates from more than forty nations were present at the meetings.

The present Congress was the first one at which the American delegation not only held the balance of power, but actually was the single group of participants which dominated the thinking and activity of the entire series of sessions. It is reported that the Palestinian delegation in particular felt that the Americans exerted more than their fair share of influence on the other delegations.

Junior League Symposium

The second symposium of the current season planned for the Junior League by Miss Lois Drosin and her committee will take place on Sunday evening, January 12th, at 8:30 in the vestry room of the Synagogue. At this time, the American Jewish Congress Committee on Community Interrelations will conduct a program designed to help the audience learn how to cope with on-the-spot anti-minority remarks. Various situations will be dramatized, with the avowed purpose of immunizing the hearers of such comments, rather than attempting to change the attitude of the speaker. The group wants to reach as large an audience as possible with this message and invites all the young people in the congregation to come that evening.

Because of the urgency of the situation, the Junior League this year has pledged the proceeds of its most important affair, the Cocktail Party, to the United Jewish Appeal. Miss Hortense Levy and Miss Isabel Rosen are acting as co-chairmen for this event which is scheduled for Sunday afternoon, February 9th, at the Hotel Delmonico. In an effort to increase the proceeds of this party, raffle books are being sold. It is hoped that the entire congregation will aid the Junior League to make as large a contribution as possible by purchasing these books. It was announced by the co-chairmen that the sum of \$1500 has been set as the goal, all of which will go to United Jewish Appeal.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SABBATH EVE

Friday, Jan. 10th, 8:30 o'clock

Mrs. Joseph Hammerman
will speak on

"The World Zionist Congress—
A Participant Reports"

SABBATH MORNING

Saturday, Jan. 11th, 10:00 a.m.

Junior Congregation Service
at 10:30 a.m.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SABBATH EVE

Friday, Jan. 17th, 8:30 p.m.

Rabbi Kertzer will preach on

"A Blueprint for American
Judaism"

SABBATH MORNING

Saturday, Jan. 18th, 10:00 a.m.

Junior Congregation Service
at 10:30 a.m.

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VOL. I

No. 9

From the Desk of Rabbi Steinberg

(Continued from page 1)

endar New Year. But the exchange of *Christmas* greetings among *Jews* is not only distasteful, it is actually a kind of usurpation — a point made savagely in the jest, which is far from a joke, about the Jewish little girl who asked her mother: "Mama, do Christians keep Christmas too?"

What makes the whole business so very regrettable to me is that it should be necessary for me to spell out to Jews a lesson in good taste and respect which all my Christian friends have had the delicacy to infer for themselves.

* * * * *

Do you, my dear congregant and reader, wish to be an informed Jew who goes about the business of Jewish living, knowing what's happening and why? Then you will have to do at least a little bit of reading. In the first instance, you'll have to subscribe to some publication that gives you Jewish news. Beyond that you'll need a journal of opinion, one which will interpret the facts and help you to draw conclusions concerning them. These two, it seems to me, are the irreducible minimum of regular reading on current affairs prerequisite to intelligent Jewish citizenship.

Which newspaper and which journal of opinion shall it be?

I not only have recommendations to make, I will make matters easy for you. Should you be interested in either or both of the publications I am about to describe, you need only drop me a note or call the synagogue office to that effect, and I'll enter your subscription for you.

Nor need you hesitate out of reluctance to trouble me. I, and more pertinently, Miss Mildred Saperstein, my secretary, would regard such a service as a *mitzvah* not a chore.

For your Jewish newspaper, I suggest "*The National Jewish Post*," a weekly published in Indianapolis, Indiana. It will give you the facts, concisely and colorfully. It will give you comment on the facts by a variety of columnists of every conceivable shade of Jewish opinion. It will inform you; at times it will inspire you; not infrequently it will infuriate you. But it will never bore you. And by reading it, you will know who's who and what's what in the Jewish world of which you are a somewhat bewildered member. The subscription rate, incidentally, is \$3.00 per year.

For interpretation, comment and discussion on a higher level, there is only one magazine which is thoughtful, self-consistent and positive. I refer to the fortnightly "*Reconstructionist*". As an editor of the "*Reconstructionist*" and a fairly frequent contributor to its columns, I should perhaps display a modest reticence concerning it. But I am, I think, capable of objectivity concerning it. I know and admit readily that it would be the easier reading were it lighter in touch and spritelier in style. But I also know that nowhere else in American Jewish letters can one find so superb a combination of passionate devotion to all things Jewish and enlightened, creative intelligence. Most important of all, this magazine presents and applies that philosophy of Jewish life which, I am convinced, is the great hope of Judaism's future on the American scene. And all, as they say who sell things rather than ideas, for \$2.00 per year.

From which it would appear that for a total expenditure of five dollars per annum and a little time any Jew capable of reading English can be adequately informed on current Jewish affairs. Who would be ignorant, and on such burning matters, when knowledge comes so cheap?

MILTON STEINBERG

WILL YOU ATTEND?

Tuesday, Jan. 7th, 8:30 p.m. — Adult Education Committee meeting at home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Grass, 19 East 88th Street.

Sunday, Jan. 12th, 8:30 p.m. — Junior League Symposium, Synagogue Vestry.

New Confirmation Policy

Gradually a policy on Confirmation has been evolved which bids fair to conciliate all points of view. Rabbis Steinberg and Kertzer and Cantor Putterman conferred with the School Board Committee on Confirmation Arrangements, which consists of Dr. Mabel C. Stovin, Mrs. Ruth Brodsky, Mrs. Helen Godwin, Mrs. Harriet Howe, Mrs. Blanche Miller, Mrs. Frances Peiper, Mr. Harry Cohen, and Mr. Saul Godwin; and they have arrived at the following policies and procedures in connection with the ceremony:

Confirmation is to be a group ritual for the 14 and 15 year old students of the Religious School who have completed High School I, rather than at the end of two years of High School training as required under last year's regulations. This will be completely independent of *Bar Mitzvah* and *Bas Mitzvah*, which are individual covenants. No longer will a formal graduation be held at the completion of Class 8, but students will be promoted to the Confirmation Class, High School I.

For this current transitional year, however, pupils of both High School I and High School II will be confirmed on the first morning of *Shavuoth*. The special pre-confirmation orientation classes are to be resumed; and the full year's study of Hebrew, necessary to insure a reading knowledge, will be waived this year, but hereafter will be required. It is planned that the Confirmation ceremony itself will resemble those of previous years in beauty and tradition.

What IS *Bas Mitzvah*?

Those two Hebrew words, rather new to these circles, are now being bandied about so freely that a short explanation of their meaning may well be in order. In defining the expression and discussing its meaning in our Synagogue, Cantor Putterman indicated that certain progressive congregations, desiring to indicate their acceptance of the changed status of womanhood, believe that one evidence of that is the *Bas Mitzvah* ceremony which accords to a girl the same opportunity for individual dedication to Israel that *Bar Mitzvah* offers a boy. This is in keeping with present-day practice which raises the status of women in all religious Jewish observances, just as suffrage has advanced their place in political matters.

Bas Mitzvah follows the pattern of *Bar Mitzvah* as far as possible, except that the girl celebrant does not receive an
(Continued on page 4)

School Highlights

by Alma D. Kaplan

Jewish parents have two kinds of problems—the sort which beset all parents, and those connected with explaining and idealizing Judaism to their children.

At the December meeting of the Parents' Association Study Group, Rabbi Kertzer offered his version of Ten Commandments for Jewish Parents. They are:

1. Thou shalt make all Jewish things beautiful.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Jew in vain.
3. Thou shalt emphasize the positive and not the negative in Jewish law.
4. Thou shalt stress the common ground of all faiths.
5. Thou shalt offer thy child a complete Jewish education.
6. Thou shalt take an active part in Jewish life.
7. Thou shalt not constantly dwell on anti-Jewish prejudice.
8. Thou shalt study thy child, and know his ways.
9. Thou shalt surround thy child with attractive Jewish books.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's status.

Discussion on each point was so animated that the time for adjournment arrived while the group was still somewhere between points 3 and 4.

Round table discussion at the meetings is channeled along helpful and constructive lines by Rabbi Kertzer.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday morning, January 15th, at 10:30 a.m. in the vestry. Mrs. George Hyman is chairman of the committee in charge.

Book Gifts Are Best

Is there a *Bar Mitzvah* or a *Bas Mitzvah* in the offing among your friends or family? If so, you are probably mumbling: "WHAT can I give which is appropriate?" Well, here is a list of suggestions to cut out and paste somewhere for future reference. By addressing Mrs. Seymour Wimpfheimer at the synagogue and enclosing a check and your card, your *Bar Mitzvah* gift problem is solved. The package will arrive at the home of the celebrant, and our School Library get the retail profit (no more than your own bookshop would receive) to purchase new books.

Select one of the following or, if you wish, request a longer list from Mrs. Wimpfheimer in care of the synagogue. These are the most popular:

AMERICANS ALL by Oscar Levin.....\$2.50

The role of the Jew in the discovery and building of America.

LOST NATION by Noah E. Aronstein.....\$1.75

Fact that is stranger and more fascinating than fiction.

CAVERN OF DESTINY by Ben Aronin.....\$2.50

Story of the quest for the lost Temple Treasures, informative as a history book, thrilling as a detective story.

A WORLD PASSED BY

by Marvin Lowenthal.....\$3.00

Highlights of Jewish experience in Art, Architecture, Travel, Legend, and Culture.

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS.....\$4.00

A GOLDEN TREASURY OF

JEWISH LITERATURE

(Edited by Leo W. Schwartz).....\$3.00

THE JEWISH CARAVAN

(Edited by Leo W. Schwartz).....\$3.00

MEMOIRS OF MY PEOPLE

(Edited by Leo W. Schwartz).....\$3.75

There is a Minneapolis business firm which we recommend as a pioneer in the field of novelties to adorn the home on Jewish holidays. These are comparable decorations to those used by Christians. Cantor Putterman saw some of these ornaments displayed in Minneapolis homes for *Hanukkah*, and remarked that they aid the *Menorah* in announcing from every room in the house, "This is *Hanukkah*!"

While it is rather early to be thinking of adornments for next *Hanukkah*, we believe that our readers would like to know of the company and its future products of this nature for other holidays besides *Hanukkah*. Write to: David's, c/o Happy's Inc., 107 Third Avenue North, Minneapolis 1, Minn., for information about its novelties.

YOUNG MARRIEDS DISCUSS

The second meeting of the "Young Marrieds" was held on Thursday evening, December 26th. Rabbi Steinberg led the group in a discussion of Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*, which was centered about two main themes: firstly, what the need for a Jewish homeland in Palestine was, as expressed by Koestler; and the latter part dealt with the communes. The group was concerned with whether this type of societal organization is new, and what the communes have to offer to the rest of the world. The group will follow-up this discussion at its next meeting when it will explore the Arab-Jewish problem as reflected in the book.

Since it had been decided to keep the group at a size small enough to meet in members' homes, another group is now being formed, the details of which will be announced in a later issue.

Book Review

It is indeed a pleasure to review Dr. David Abrahamson's latest book "The Mind and Death of a Genius" because the author, a member of our own Park Avenue Synagogue, is personally known to me. The story he told one evening of his thrilling experiences from the time of the Nazi invasion of his native city, Oslo, Norway, to his ultimate arrival in this country held his listeners spell-bound. It was obvious at that time that Dr. Abrahamson is a brilliant narrator with the capacity of sustaining interest by his sincerity and clarity of detail.

In his book are found the same attention to detail and honest evaluation of material. With great accuracy of research he holds the attention of the reader as the facts are revealed and Dr. Abrahamson delineates the psychology of an individual and brings it into scientific focus.

In the year 1903 a gifted young Viennese psychologist-biologist, Otto Weininger, wrote a book called "Sex and Character." The book was so radical in its ideas that it created a great furor and became the basis for a psychological controversy among intellectuals throughout Europe. The excitement created would have subsided had it not been for the fact that several months after the publication of the book, the author, then only 23 years old, went to the home of Beethoven and committed suicide. Inasmuch as it is generally conceded that only pathologically sick people commit suicide, the controversy increased in tenor and the question was raised as to whether or not the author was psychotic when he wrote the book.

In order to prove his point that Otto Weininger must have been mentally diseased, Dr. Abrahamson probes into the past of Otto Weininger and points out early peculiarities and tendencies indicating the presence of incipient schizophrenia. Since Dr. Abrahamson is one of the foremost authorities on mental disease the book is a very important contribution and will be of great value to professionals in the fields of psychiatry and psychology.

After much experience in various hospitals and clinics both abroad and in this country, Dr. Abrahamson is now affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University. Among many other publications by the same author are his books, "Crime and the Human Mind" and "Men, Mind and Power."

—MATHILDE WEILL COHEN

Anniversaries

We happily congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Charles Weill whose 56th wedding anniversary was joyously celebrated on January 4th, and Mr. and Mrs. Milton Heller who celebrate their 30th anniversary on January 15th; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gevirtz are comparative newlyweds, with their 15th anniversary on January 12th.

Engagements

The Synagogue takes pleasure in noting the following engagements: Miss Norma Schwamm, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Saul Schwamm, to Lt. Leonard E. Sweet, USNR; Miss Judith L. Arkin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard L. Arkin, to Mr. Arthur M. Lipkint, Jr.; and Miss Suzanne W. Solomon, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Solomon, to Mr. Danforth Cardozo, Jr.; Miss Naomi Levin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Levin, to Mr. Charles M. Jacobson.

Marriage

Best wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur V. Levey on the marriage of their daughter Marcia to Mr. Hubert N. Laudin on January 11th.

Deaths

We announce with regret the passing of Mr. Samuel Seidman, father of Mr. David E. Seidman; of Mr. Herman Steintal, brother of Mrs. Max Hamburg; and of Mr. Max M. Warburg, father of Mrs. Charles Wyzanski.

New Confirmation Policy

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"*aliyah*" (a portion of the *Torah* reading). Instead, her father escorts her to the Reading Desk and recites the blessings which accompany the individual portions. Then the *Bas Mitzvah* herself reads the assigned portion, in Hebrew or English. Following the *Torah* readings, she renders the *Haftarah*, chanting the blessings and reading prophetic selections of her own choice, picked because they are meaningful and of personal importance to her.

The celebrant may be garbed in white and carry flowers if it is desired. In general the occasion is one of great beauty and dignity, significance and rejoicing, for it marks the acceptance by a young Jewess of her individual responsibilities toward her people.

Of the 200,000 Jewish children of school age in Greater New York, only 63,000 have received any type of Jewish education.

NOTICE

The Annual Meeting of the Synagogue which, under the By-Laws of the Congregation, is held during the first half of January, is to be called for January 14th, 1947, at 8:30 p.m.

It should be noted, however, that the meeting will not be held on that evening and will be adjourned until February 9th, 1947, when the meeting will be held in conjunction with an annual dinner of the congregation. Notice of this interesting event will be covered in a forthcoming issue of the BULLETIN.

Sisterhood Sews for SOS

One of the most active groups of the Sisterhood is the Red Cross sewing group that meets every Wednesday from ten to three o'clock in the Vestry. On May 6, 1940, Mrs. Sarah Botein Bernstein, Mrs. Leopold Friedman and Mrs. Irving Shapiro organized a group of women who worked thru the war years and are still working together for Red Cross and J.D.C. Mrs. Friedman holds the service record for having attended every single sewing session from its inception. Mrs. Nathan Rosenthal and Mrs. Sam Haft are doing an excellent job in production, and Mrs. Maurice Manheimer knits countless squares which are put together for afghans.

There is a pressing need for flannel, wool, and knitting yarns to enable the J.D.C. to receive the necessary garments it so urgently needs this year. If a number of people will send in these materials it would constitute a real service. At present these women are working on blouses, jackets, pajamas, coats, and overalls for little boys. We would appreciate more workers, so join us on Wednesdays and help to clothe those in need. Bring your own sandwich and enjoy tea when we stop for a snack at noon.

Collegiate Oneg Shabbat

The annual Collegiate Service held in the Synagogue December 27th was followed by a stimulating discussion and *Oneg Shabbat* in the vestry rooms. The 50 Collegians present and Rabbi Kass, Hillel Director of McGill University, took part.

Adult Committee Plans

The Committee on Adult Education is now making plans for the second half of the current season which, according to Harold H. Levin, chairman, will start on Monday evening, February 24th. It will continue for six consecutive Monday evenings, until March 31.

Unlike the past series, Rabbi Kertzer and Cantor Putterman will not give their auxiliary courses so as to conflict with each other. They will each share three classes from 8 to 9 o'clock, so that members of the congregation will be able to hear both of them. Rabbi Kertzer will present the first three lectures, on the general subject of "The Architecture of the Prayer Book," and Cantor Putterman will use the last three lectures for illustration of liturgical music, with the last session devoted entirely to the music of Passover and of the *Seder*.

The major lecture series will continue to be given from 9 to 10 p.m. on each night the course is held. Professor Simon Greenberg, Provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary, will deliver the first four lectures. His series will cover aspects of Jewish history from the medieval period to the present day. The specific topics of each lecture will be announced in future issues of the BULLETIN. Rabbi Kertzer and Rabbi Steinberg will close the series, each presenting one lecture.

Mr. Levin expressed the hope that more members of the congregation will take advantage of the opportunity to participate in one of the most significant activities sponsored by the synagogue. The next meeting of the Adult Education Committee will be held on Tuesday evening, January 7th, at 8:30 o'clock, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Grass, 19 East 88th Street.

THE PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE

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